

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 17-19 and 20-22 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 17 and 20 are in independent form. Claims 1-3 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Claims 17-22 have been added to provide Applicant with a more complete scope of protection. Claims 4-16 have been canceled, and will not be mentioned further. Corrected sheets of drawing to meet the drawing objection, and a substitute specification to meet the objections to the specification, are being prepared and will be submitted shortly. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

A Third Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. That claim has been reviewed and amended as deemed necessary to ensure its compliance with the requirements of section 112, and withdrawal of the rejection under that Section is respectfully requested.

In addition, Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patent 5,889,928 (Nakamura et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 5,978,506 (Murayama et al.).

As is discussed in more detail in the present application, Applicant's invention is concerned with the task of improving compensation for changes in the

response of various portions of a multi-function peripheral resulting from fluctuations in environmental conditions, or from the simple passage of time.

Independent Claim 1 is directed to an image forming apparatus for outputting an image based on inputted image data, the apparatus comprising reading means for reading an image and generating image data, creation means for creating a correction table for correcting the density characteristics of the image data, and correction means for correcting the density characteristics of the image data, based on the correction table. also provided are output means for outputting an image based on the corrected image data.

According to Claim 1, the creation means create the correction table based on a train of data generated by the reading means by reading plural gradient patterns outputted by the output means, and those plural gradient patterns are disposed in point symmetry with respect to a center position of the image. Also, according to Claim 1, the correction table is created by performing a smoothing process using some pieces of data whose number changes depending on the position of data in the generated train of data.

Nakamura relates to a technique of alleviating a sudden change in gradation of a gradation correction curve, as shown in Fig. 7. As the Office Action correctly notes, that patent does not teach or suggest all the features of Claim 1. *Murayama* relates to a system in which patches are disposed in point symmetry, as shown in Fig. 11. However, Applicant submits that nothing has been found in either *Nakamura* or *Murayama* that

would even hint at the feature that a “correction table is created by performing a smoothing process using some pieces of data whose number changes depending on the position of data in said generated train of data”, as recited in independent Claim 1. This feature of the apparatus of Claim 1 brings a specific technical advantage: the resultant smoothing is faithful to the train of data because the smoothing process is properly adjusted such a way that for a portion of a steep slope in the train of data the smoothing process is performed using a small number of data pieces, while for a portion of a gentle slope in the train of data the smoothing process is performed using a large number of data pieces. This advantage is not obtained by adopting the techniques of *Nakamura* and *Murayama*, even if those techniques are combined in the manner proposed in the Office Action, or in any other manner (even assuming, for argument’s sake, that such combinations would even be permissible ones). For these reasons, Claim 1 is deemed to be clearly allowable over those patents.

Independent Claims 17 and 20 are respectively a method and a memory-medium claim corresponding to apparatus Claim 1, and are deemed also to be clearly allowable over *Nakamura* and *Murayama* by virtue of at least the reasons discussed above with regard to Claim 1.

A review of the other art of record, including *Hayashi*, has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant’s opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed

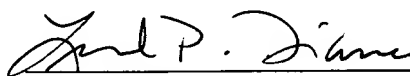
above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leonard P. Diana", is written over a horizontal line.

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